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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 DILI 000296

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DEPT FOR EAP/MTS
NSC FOR HOLLY MORROW
USUN FOR GORDON OLSON AND RICHARD MCCURRY
USPACOM FOR JOC AND POLAD

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [UN](#) [CASC](#) [AU](#) [PO](#) [TT](#)
SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR SITREP FOR JUNE 6, 2006

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CLASSIFIED BY: Grover Joseph Rees, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy
Dili, Department of State.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (U) Summary:

1500 Anti-Alkatiri demonstrators arrive from western districts;
Ambassador meets with new Minister of the Interior
Parliament deliberates with a bare quorum;
Portuguese paramilitary police continue operations without JTF
Coordination;
Malaysian diplomats announce need for external funding;
Security conditions in the city;
Internally displaced persons;
American citizens and Embassy security.
End summary.

1500 Anti-Alkatiri demonstrators arrive from western districts

12. (SBU) Late in the afternoon approximately 35 large transport trucks, each carrying 35 to 40 demonstrators, entered the capital from the west. Bearing "Down with Alkatiri, Viva Xanana" banners, the trucks, carrying mostly young, unarmed men in civilian clothes, were escorted by tanks and troop carriers full of Australian and Malaysian peacekeepers. Several known members of the ex-FDTL "petitioners" were spotted in the trucks by EmbOffs. Leaders of the Democratic Party (PD) were also seen in the convoy. The "deputy coordinator" of the demonstration was a PD leader from Maliana district. An EmbOff on the site reported that the demonstrators cooperated with the Joint Task Force (JTF) troops and appeared calm and peaceful. Embassy sources and the Portuguese media reported that the demonstrators were initially stopped by Malaysian soldiers, but they were escorted into town by JTF forces after ad hoc telephone negotiations between Foreign Affairs and Defense Minister Jose Ramos-Horta and dissident military leader Major Augusto Tara, who coordinated the convoy and demonstration. Under this agreement, the demonstrators were escorted through the city and

allowed to pass by the Palacio do Governo, Parliament, and United Nations office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL) Headquarters, with a final stop at President Xanana Gusmao's office to deliver a petition demanding the dismissal of Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri. As the trucks drove through the western suburbs en route to the main government buildings, bystanders jumped onto the trucks to join the convoy.

¶3. (U) After arriving at the President's Office, Major Tara was allowed to meet briefly with President Gusmao to deliver the group's demands in the form of a petition. The petition's demands included that Gusmao immediately dissolve Parliament and dismiss the Prime Minister, that he establish a transitional government in their place, and that national elections be held within six months. If these demands are not met within 48 hours, the petition continues, the demonstrators will organize a national strike against the government.

¶4. (U) The two men later emerged and gave impromptu speeches from the top of one of a car parked in front of the President's office. The President told the crowd that the current situation is a complicated and dangerous crisis which is difficult for the Government to solve. He continued by saying that it is important that the crisis be resolved step-by-step and asked the demonstrators to return home to their districts so that this important work could continue. The President then reaffirmed his duty to protect the people and told the crowd that if he fails to fulfill this duty, they should return to speak with him directly. Major Tara then announced in a brief speech that he was coordinating an effort across all 13 districts to fight for peace and justice in the country. After the speeches ended, the demonstrators were escorted back out of the city by JTF forces. Although the President had asked that they return to their homes, Embassy has received unconfirmed reports that some or all of the demonstrators may have proceeded only as far as Tasitolu, just to the west of Dili.

¶5. (U) Although today's demonstrators came from the western districts, they made a point of disavowing any east-west hostilities. Some of the demonstrators carried signs with

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legends such as "Loromonu-Lorosa'e hamutuk hatun Alkatiri" (East-West united to remove Alkatiri). Embassy sources have reported that a convoy from the Eastern districts was to have joined the demonstration in Dili, but that this convoy was disbanded after an appeal from Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak and President of Parliament Francisco Lu'Olo Guterres.

Ambassador meets with new Minister of the Interior

¶6. (U) Ambassador Rees met today with newly appointed Minister of the Interior Alcino Baris, who was just about to chair the first co-ordination meeting among Australian, Portuguese, New Zealand, and Malaysian police officials. Baris said the police service (PNTL) is operating normally everywhere in the country outside Dili and can be restored to operational status in Dili as soon as the international forces and President Gusmao believe this to be appropriate. He said PNTL officers are not participating in joint patrols with international forces but that they are sometimes being used as interpreters. Baris said he intended to re-establish the disciplinary system within the next few days and to be sure that PNTL officers who are known to have committed human rights violations will not be assigned to sensitive positions, even if these violations have not yet been the subject of disciplinary proceedings. He also said that PNTL officers from the eastern and western districts are now working --- and in some cases living --- side by side at the Police Academy and PNTL Headquarters in Dili, and that reconciling "Loromonu/Lorosa'e" differences within the Department will be among his top priorities.

¶7. (C) Comment: Although Minister Baris said all the right things in today's meeting and seemed genuinely happy to be meeting with the U.S. Ambassador, it remains to be seen whether

he will follow through. He is a member of the "Mozambique group" who served until recently as an apparently loyal deputy to disgraced ex-Minister Rogerio Lobato. During the recent violence he sought refuge with President Gusmao and has reportedly shared with the President numerous unsavory details of Lobato's conduct in office. One cause for concern is that Baris was accompanied in the meeting by Deputy PNTL Commissioner Ismael Babo, who was regarded as Lobato's closest ally in the PNTL until late May when he too sought refuge with President Gusmao. PNTL Commissioner Paulo Martins, a Gusmao ally who earned Lobato's enmity in part because he refused to implement Lobato's orders to use excessive force against demonstrators and other perceived adversaries, was not in today's meeting, and Baris deflected questions that would have given him an opportunity to express his confidence in Martins. End Comment.

Parliament deliberates with a bare quorum

18. (U) According to the National Parliament's majority leader, Francisco Branco, deliberations continued today in Parliament regarding the current crisis. Parliamentarians appealed for the Government to address the problem of weapons distribution in the country, with particular emphasis on weapons that are now in the hands of civilians. Branco reported that 45 Members of Parliament (MPs) were present today, the minimum number needed for a quorum. Among these, he said, there was at least one representative each from most opposition parties. However, a number of prominent opposition leaders have told EmbOffs they are staying away from Parliament because they fear for their lives. The parliamentary leader of one opposition party did report for work at Parliament today, but she reported that upon entering the Parliament building she was confronted by a male Fretilin member of parliament who threatened that "we will shoot the opposition people dead." She then returned home without entering the Parliament building.

Portuguese paramilitary police continue operations without JTF Coordination

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19. (C) The Security Attache at the Portuguese Embassy conveyed the frustration of the Portuguese paramilitary police (GNR) in sharing policing responsibilities with the Australian-led JTF. Showing virtually no intent to coordinate activities with the Australians, the Attache stated that the GNR and JTF forces could simply coordinate on an ad hoc basis on the ground rather than needing to work together at the highest levels. GNR and JTF leaders have had preliminary meetings but have not yet exchanged liaison officers. Nor do they appear to have established clear channels of communication. The Portuguese Attache characterized this afternoon's co-ordination meeting at the Ministry of the Interior, which included the Portuguese Ambassador as well as what appeared to be several GNR members and several Australian police officers, as a preliminary meeting "to coordinate how they will coordinate."

110. (C) The GNR clearly sees itself as the entity currently responsibly for gendarme-like policing which would respond to riots and demonstrations and be responsible for "imposing overall order". In the GNR view, JTF soldiers should be responsible for disarming civilians and dissidents and Australian Federal Police ought be assigned to community policing. GNR forces also do not appear to be under the direct command of any GOET official. The Attache informed EmbOff that while GNR commanders keep the new Minister of the Interior and the Office of the President abreast of their activities, the GNR initiates operations based on reports of unrest received by the Portuguese Embassy, informing the GOET only at a later stage. The GNR sees these activities as authorized under an agreement signed between Minister Ramos-Horta and the Portuguese Ambassador which reportedly grants the GNR policing authority for Dili and surrounding environs. The few people who have been

arrested during the GNR's initial operations yesterday and today have been handed over to the Prosecutor General's Office, which has in turn placed them in a Timorese-run jail. The Attache reported that the GNR's operations would be more frequent and more robust once a planeload of equipment arrives from Portugal early next week.

¶11. (C) When questioned about a timeline for the GNR's mission in Timor, the Portuguese Attache reported that the agreement signed between the GOET and the GOP committed the GNR to remaining until national elections are held. In addition to acting as a policing authority, the GNR plans to retrain the Timorese riot police, the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR), and possibly a new and as-yet nonexistent border unit similar to the Special Reserve Unit (PRU). The Attache continued by reiterating that Portugal does not intend to provide a general police force for the country and he said his Government will likely encourage countries in the region to provide a more routine police force. Although not explicitly stated, the Attache clearly implied that the GOP is reluctant to accept an arrangement whereby the Australian Federal Police would be given direct policing authority in East Timor, preferring instead a UN Police Contingent similar to the one established under UNTAET. While the GOP appears to have strong views on the role of the GNR, both the Attache and other officers at the Portuguese Embassy appear quite willing to discuss future policing arrangements with other embassies. (Comment: Embassy respectfully suggests that the Department ask our missions in Canberra and Lisbon to urge the GOA and GOP to coordinate more closely on security operations in East Timor. End comment.)

Malaysian diplomats announce need for external funding

¶12. (C) The Malaysian Embassy told us they are worried they cannot sustain their participation in the Joint Task Force (JTF) beyond 30 days without the financial assistance they believe would be provided by a UN mandate. The 300 Malaysian troops are controlling the sector west of the Comoro River, near the airport. The Malaysians report they are pleased with the

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cooperation within the JTF. The colonel commanding the Malaysian contingent takes orders from Australian Brigadier Mick Slater, commanding the Joint Task Force. The Malaysians share Australian concerns about the Portuguese police (GNR) answering directly to the President and Prime Minister of East Timor. They told Emboff, however, that they hoped today's meeting of Australian, Malaysian, Portuguese, and New Zealand police representatives with Interior Minister Baris will help in coordinating the policing effort. Embassy will report further when the results of this afternoon's coordination meeting are known.

Security conditions in the city

¶13. (SBU) About five gunshots were heard last night in the neighborhoods directly behind the US Embassy. There were also reports of gunfire in other neighborhoods, including some reports that a gun was fired from a speeding car. JTF forces responded by searching the area within 30 minutes of the gunfire. Fires continued around the city overnight and during the day, but appear to be less frequent than in previous days. Today, JTF forces conducted a cordon and search operation in the Pantai Kelapa, Fatuhada, and Comoro neighborhoods near the US Embassy. The operation was conducted by the ADF Battle Group and is still ongoing.

Internally displaced persons

¶14. (SBU) A representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) told Emboff that a sizeable number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have begun to leave the camps, not for their homes in Dili but rather for the districts from which they

or their families originally came. Many more reportedly wish to follow, but IOM and UNHCR are waiting for approval from the GOET before committing transportation resources to an operation that would relocate Dili residents to other districts. International aid agencies and NGOs have established focal points in each IDP camp to improve coordination, but NGO representatives have stated that communications between the IDP camps and the JTF and GNR security forces need to be improved to provide for more speedy responses to security threats to the camps by youth gangs and other troublemakers. A recently arrived UNHCR team has received two planeloads full of tents, plastic sheeting, and other materials that they say will be used to establish new, well-planned camps with good sanitation facilities where IDPs from the overcrowded existing camps can be relocated. Internationals involved in the IDP relief effort have commented on the impressive handling of the situation by both the Ministry of Labor and Solidarity and Ministry of Health as well as by the custodians of the camp sites, who are mostly priests and nuns.

¶15. (U) An airlift of emergency supplies from USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) arrived today and will soon be distributed in IDP camps by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and CARE, who are also providing additional U.S.-funded goods and services. Embassy Dili and the AID mission in East Timor have also requested a \$1 million replenishment of Food For Peace (FFP) stocks to replenish local World Food Program supplies. Additional support is under consideration, both for emergency relief and for medium-to-long-term needs.

American citizens and Embassy security

¶16. (SBU) The Embassy is in contact with the 56 private American citizens remaining in East Timor. The Embassy continues to operate with 12 American employees, 29 Marines, and six Mobile Security Division (MSD) members. The USAID compound is open for business during regular working hours. Absenteeism in the local guard force is not higher than five percent per shift. Several other local staff at the Embassy and USAID are not reporting for duty due to conditions in the city.
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